5.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of ~~claims 1-4~~ claim 1-2, wherein the composition comprises a compound having a higher affinity for the metal surface than the sulfiding compound.

6.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of ~~claims 1-4~~, wherein the composition comprises an effective amount of a phosphorus in the form of a phosphorus-containing compound to reduce sulfidation of the metal.

7.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of ~~claims 1-4~~, wherein the effective amount of the phosphorus is between about 0.001 ppm and about 20 ppm in the fluid.

8.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of claim 7, wherein the effective amount of the phosphorus is between about 0.01 ppm and about 10 ppm in the fluid.

9.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of claim 8, wherein the effective amount of the phosphorus is between about 0.1 ppm and about 5 ppm in the fluid.

10.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of claim 8, wherein the effective amount of the phosphorus is between about 0.1 ppm to about 2 ppm.

11.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of claim 8, wherein the effective amount of the phosphorus is between about 0.1 ppm and about 1 ppm

12.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of claim 8, wherein the effective amount of the phosphorus is between about 0.2 ppm and about 0.8 ppm.

13.(**currently amended**) The method~~, surface or apparatus~~ of claim 8, wherein the

phosphorus-containing compound comprises phosphorus, phosphines of formulas PH_3, PRH_2, PR_2H, and R_3P where each R is the same or different and is a C1 to C20 carbon-containing group including alkyl, aryl, alkaryl or aralkyl; , phosphites including ammonium phosphites; alkali metal phosphites; alkaline metal phosphites; phosphites having organic counter ions; phosphates including ammonium phosphates; alkali metal phosphates; alkaline metal phosphates; phosphates having organic counter ions; pyrophosphates including ammonium pyrophosphates; alkali metal pyrophosphates; alkaline metal pyrophosphates; pyrophosphates having organic counter ions; polyphosphates including ammonium polyphosphates; alkali metal polyphosphates; alkaline metal polyphosphates; polyphosphates having organic counter ions; thiophosphates; thiophoshites; or other phosphorus-containing compounds capable of inhibiting sulfuric corrosion of metal surfaces, or mixtures or combinations thereof.

14.(**original**) A method of pre-treating metal surfaces comprising the steps of:

contacting a metal surface with an effective amount of a pre-treating composition sufficient to deposit onto the metal surface a protective coating, where the coating prevents or reduces sulfidation of the metal by deactivating metal sites involved in the formation of atomic sulfur and/or sulfides at or on the surface.

15.(**original**) The method claim 14, wherein the pre-treating composition comprises an organo-phosphorus compound and the method further comprising the step of:

oxidizing the organo-phosphorus compound to a phosphorus oxide compound.

16.(**original**) The method claim 14, wherein the composition comprises a compound having a higher affinity for the metal surface than the sulfiding compound.

17.(**original**) The method claims 14, wherein the composition comprises an effective amount of phosphorus in the form of a phosphorus-containing compound.

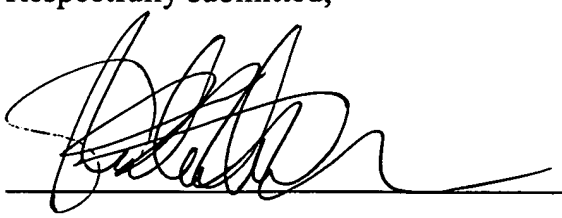
18.(**original**) The method claims 14, wherein the effective amount of the phosphorus is between about 0.1 ppm and about 5 ppm in the fluid.

19.(**original**) The method claims 14, wherein the effective amount of the phosphorus is between about 0.2 ppm and about 0.8 ppm.

20.(**original**) The method claims 14, wherein the phosphorus-containing compound comprises phosphorus, phosphines of formulas PH_3, PRH_2, PR_2H, and R_3P where each R is the same or different and is a C1 to C20 carbon-containing group including alkyl, aryl, alkaryl or aralkyl; , phosphites including ammonium phosphites; alkali metal phosphites; alkaline metal phosphites; phosphites having organic counter ions; phosphates including ammonium phosphates; a lkali metal phosphates; alkaline metal phosphates; phosphates having organic counter ions; pyrophosphates including ammonium pyrophosphates; alkali metal pyrophosphates; alkaline metal pyrophosphates; pyrophosphates having organic counter ions; polyphosphates including ammonium polyphosphates; alkali metal polyphosphates; alkaline metal polyphosphates; polyphosphates having organic counter ions; thiophosphates; thiophoshites; or other phosphorus-containing compounds capable of inhibiting sulfuric corrosion of metal surfaces, or mixtures or combinations thereof.

If it would be of assistance in resolving any issues in this application, the Examiner is kindly invited to contact applicant's attorney Robert W. Strozier at 713.977.7000

Respectfully submitted,



Date: **October 7, 2003**

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Attorney for Applicants